



Charlotte Mason's House of Education,
Scale How, Ambleside, UK, 2009

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which side of the school he is naturally best fitted for. And in the smaller towns, where only one type of school exists, the question of sending a boy away from home in order to place him at a different type of school is thus postponed also for three years. Again, in the case of the combination of Gymnasium and Realgymnasium as lately introduced in Hanover and Karlsruhe, while the question of attending a Realschule must be settled at the age above mentioned, the bifurcation into Gymnasium and Realgymnasium does not take place till IIb.—two years later; so that at these schools a boy will reach the age of fourteen to fifteen before the decision as to English or Greek has to be made. To us in England, of course, this system in its main points is not new. It looks in fact very much like the time-honoured arrangement of the classical and modern side.

(To be continued)

GOD'S GIFTS.*

ON THE TRAINING OF THE SOUL.

BY LADY LAURA RIDDING.

THE other day at the funeral of one of our country's patriotic sons, a wreath lay on the coffin with these touching words on it: "From his Mother: God gave him to her." Does not that inscription sum up the true attitude of the mother, realizing the stupendous trust placed by God in her hands, of a child to be trained for Eternity by her?

The training means the training of body, mind, soul. About this last I am asked to speak to-day. May I read to you Adelaide Proctor's poem, called "God's gifts?"

The two examples given here by her are extreme illustrations. They mark in strong lines the contrast of the results of neglect and careful training of character.

In the sets of people among whom your work lies, the training of the body and of the mind is rarely neglected. The soul's training is the one so often ignored, deficient in method or study. We realize this when we compare the quality of the ordinary religious training given to children with the advances made in physical and mental training. Canon Gore points out as the three great movements of human life:

(1) *The moving towards nature to appreciate its resources, i.e., the history of Civilization: this we may perceive in miniature in the physical training of the child.* (2) *The moving out to develop relations of man with man, i.e., the history of Society: this we may watch in miniature in the mental and character training of the child.* (3) *The moving out towards God, i.e., the history of Religion—of this Canon Gore says: "This movement looked at in the broad, is quite as perceptible and as important as the other two movements We are the heirs of the ages in the matter of prayer, no less than*

*An Address given to the Derby Branch of the Parents' Educational Union in October, 1898.

in the matters of civilization and society." Now can we feel that this training of the soul of the child has been recognized in its due importance, studied in its methods, developed under acquired experience, fulfilled with anything of the same intelligent completeness as the other two hygienic and intellectual trainings of the individual body and mind? To say nothing of cases of definite neglect of this training, or of obsolete or false methods of training, or of the extraordinary modern theory that it fetters a child's spiritual parts to teach it dogma before it is of age to understand mysteries, is there no truth in Wesley's assertion, that whilst by example and precept children are carefully fitted for taking their part in the struggle of life, parents teach atheism to their children, turn them into atheists, by their talk? "They talk of one thousand things but God; their children never hear His name mentioned from year's end to year's end." Can such silence breed anything but contempt and unbelief? The *Guardian* newspaper, only a few weeks ago, spoke in a review of the "universally admitted fact that the children of the middle and upper classes are far below the children of the working classes in this knowledge of religion. This is because religion is taught in the elementary schools, while it is assumed that the children of the rich are all taught at home—an assumption the falseness of which is quite evident to those who come across these children in their school life. Now religion and morality are the two things which can be taught at home, and if our boys are growing up deficient in the knowledge of these two, it is obvious that the parents are not doing their work properly."

Yet the majority of these parents take the first step in the religious training of their children by bringing them to Holy Baptism; and they could not do better than study the lines of training of the soul which were outlined before them at the font. These lines are stated in the prayer of Dedication, and in the vows taken for the child by his godparents. They pray that the child shall be received by the Lord Jesus Christ; and that he shall be released of his sins; they vow renunciation of sin. They pray that he shall be sanctified by the Holy Ghost; they vow belief in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. They pray that he shall be given the kingdom of Heaven and everlasting life;

they vow obedience to the King, and that he shall walk in this obedience all the days of his life. Again the final address made to the godparents and congregation indicates how the spiritual training of the child shall be carried out, so that "this child may be virtuously brought up to lead a Godly and Christian life; remembering always, that Baptism doth represent unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ and to be made like unto Him; that, as He died and rose again for us, so should we, who are baptized, die from sin and rise again unto righteousness, continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections and daily proceedings in all virtue and godliness of living."

This is a tremendous profession. It is to be taught the child by *example*. "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua xxiv. 15.) Wesley says to parents that this resolve, if carried out in reality, meets such hindrances that only the mighty power of God can lead them through. "You will have all the Saints of the world to grapple with, who will think that you carry things too far; you will have all the powers of darkness; you will have above all, the deceitfulness of your own heart."

The great baptismal lessons are: Renunciation, Faith, Obedience. "To do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God" (Micah vi. 8.) This is what we must train the child to do. Justice and mercy include lessons in the wide responsibility of citizenship, of patriotism, of human brotherhood; in the use of talents, time, culture, strength, memory, as loans from God to be expended on the commonweal; in self-control, consideration and sympathy in the relations of family, of ruled, of ruler. And duty to God must permeate all these human relations. Growth in habits of prayer, of Bible study, of discipline, of worship, of holiness, with self-dedication and perseverance, must be stimulated by precept, by encouragement, by example. A soul thus trained and developed will not fall a prey to the hardness or restlessness which work such havoc in this generation through the strain of modern life. If parents could look into and see and realize what the shrivelled starved souls around them suffer, they would not need to be awakened to the vital necessity of nourishing and training their children's souls as well as their bodies and minds. I

have never forgotten some impassioned words of George Macdonald's on this subject, in a lecture which he gave twenty years ago on *King Lear*. They were to this effect:—"Lear's soul had not grown to what it was meant to be, and so all the growth had to be compressed through fearful sufferings into a few short weeks at the end of his life. That is always torture. The soul is meant to be growing and deepening through a whole lifetime. That is why so many days are portioned out to each of us. Nothing is more horrible than the outside of a man or woman, a lovely form, with its soul within not grown up in proportion. It sometimes seems as if such a person's soul must rattle like a dried pea inside them. It is so shrunk from what it was meant to be in such a casket. It is rather like what we have heard of some *nouveaux riches* who build themselves palaces, and then for very comfort's sake go and sit in the kitchen. Each of us is given a glorious palace to inhabit, with such a library, such a lovely picture gallery, such music and harmony and beauty all around, and a glimpse of heaven itself if we open the window,—and yet some of us go and live in the coal cellar! all our lives, too, making prisoners of our souls till they grow idiotic and blind for very want of food and light."

We should pray for guidance in this great work of training the souls of the children, these wonderful gifts of God to us.

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF EDUCATION.

BY J. STRACHAN, M.D.

A FEW years ago a parliamentary commission, appointed to investigate into alleged prevalence of over-pressure in English schools, reported that a number of cases of serious illness, and some of actual death, had undoubtedly been caused directly by school work. Most of us could point to similar cases, which may well be regarded as very extreme, and are to be estimated, not by their number but by their significance, as indicating a certain tendency in school life. There are many degrees of injury short of death. The occurrence of even one death or serious illness, caused directly by school work, is sufficient to stamp that work as in some way inconsistent with the laws of health, and to suggest the existence of much evil in connexion with it, which may never come to the knowledge of the public. In medical practice we have all frequent occasion to observe close relation between prize taking at school and pale cheeks, poor appetite, headaches, sleeplessness, and other indications of deteriorated health, with a tendency to nervous affections at the time or in later years. These and other facts which might be mentioned fully justify the inference that school procedure runs upon unsafe lines, and that the danger to the pupils is in proportion to the pressure under which it is driven.

If we seek an explanation of such a state of matters we may find it sufficiently indicated by Prof. Bain, of Aberdeen, in his book *Education as a Science*. In that book of 438 pages the "Bearings of Physiology" are disposed of in less than three pages. In these we find the following passages:—"The Science of Physiology is quite distinct from the process of education." "The art of Education assumes a certain average physical health; and does not inquire into the means of keeping up or increasing that average." "The inquiry must proceed upon our direct experience in the work